be permitted to observe, that intellectual pleasure was not that ideal thing which it was sometimes supposed to be, but it was one of the highest utilities: for what would become of us if our whole lives were devoted to toil and drudgery, and we were deprived of those graces and charms which were shed around us by those intellectual luxuries which we possessed? What would be all our hours of leisure, if we had no power to fill them up with something more charming than the haunts of the tavern or the race-course? Keats, the boy-poet of England, had said, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;" and the more things of beauty we acquired, and learned to understand and love, the more would our mental faculties be refined, and we should be placed in a better position to understand the feeling of joy in everything that contained joy,—and what was there in nature that did not?

Mr. George Godwin, in addressing the meeting, said he owed his position before them rather to the politeness of the committee than to any pretensions of his own; and he fancied that that politeness proceeded from the fact that he had travelled 200 miles to be present at the meeting, and intended to go 200 miles more in returning the next morning. Had the journey been one of difficulty, he should have been amply repaid by the gratification which the meeting had afforded him; but science had removed all difficulties. Manchester was London, and London was Manchester. Where the locomotive failed, we had brought controlled lightning to our aid, so that no sooner was an enactment passed, or a great fact in science discovered, or a high and noble thought expressed, than it thrilled through every nerve of the kingdom, and became at one instant the common property of all. When Shakspeare, the poet of all time and the friend of all men, made his fairy Puck able to "put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes," he little thought that, within two centuries from that date, the grosser spirituality of man would have literally effected this result. We might hope that, in a very short time, there would not be a hole in the kingdom wherein ignorance could hide her dangerous and degraded head. Mr. Bell had said, "Knowledge is power," and seemed ashamed of having made use of the expression. He ventured to think it could not be too often repeated. It had now exhibited itself, too, in a new and most important form. Until it was known that bad air and bad drainage were stealthily killing thousands—until the facts collected became so numerous that to deny them was impossible, no nation was alive to this destructive agency, which did more harm annually than a Waterloo. But it was shown that, living in one part of the country, a man might hope to live fifty years, whereas in another he could only expect to live thirty; that draining a town would add ten years to a man's life; and that paving it would give him a chance of five years longer. Here, then, we saw most conclusively, indeed, that knowledge was power; and power of no ordinary character; for the power of prolonging life was surely only second to the power of giving life; and it was to be hoped that that movement, which had been so well begun, would be aided and assisted in every way possible. Thousands of lives had been lost unnecessarily, and thousands of pounds spent in alleviating distress thus caused, which might have been better employed in increasing enjoyment and advancing progress. A considerable improvement, in consequence of the extension of knowledge, had taken place in another department: he referred to the preservation of antiquities, and he mentioned this because of the position which the noble chairman occupied as president of the Society of Antiquaries. "Past and future," as Wordsworth said, "are the wings on whose support, harmoniously conjoined, moves the great spirit of human knowledge." We had recently appreciated the importance of these memorials of the past, regarding them as stepping-stones to the future, and as shewing what had been done, leading us to further advancement. It had been said, in the words of Keats, that "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." That reminded him of a department of knowledge to which little reference had been made during the evening; he alluded to the study of art. A great and important change was taking place in respect of art. A few years ago, the pleasures which this department of knowledge opened were mainly confined to the galleries of the wealthy. Through the powers of association, a movement had taken place, by which the means of enjoyment and the power of appreciation in this respect were being opened up to all. If there was any point to justify him in standing before them at that meeting, it would be the part, however humble it might be, that he had played in connection with the Art-Union of London. Little more than eleven years ago, the four or five individuals who sat down to organize that association scarcely expected that, at this time, the number of members would amount to 18,000, or that they would have agents scattered over the globe, wherever English was spoken, including even Canton, in "the celestial empire." One important point effected by such institutions, was the opening, freely to the public, of exhibitions of works of art, and then recording the fact that this could be done safely. In London, as many as 150,000 or 200,000 persons had been admitted to the exhibitions, and without the occurrence of a single accident or disturbance. He had been gratified to learn that the same experiment had been tried in Manchester, and that 17,000 persons, chiefly from the working classes, had been admitted to the exhibition of paintings, at a nominal charge, and that no accident or wanton mischief had occurred,—thus contradicting the assertions which had been made, and which had had the effect of keeping the people from visiting the noble monuments of our country. Such circumstances could not fail to have an immense influence on society. Art as a teacher was but beginning to be understood. As one great means of advancing art, due consideration should be given to all artists. Every man, whether a sculptor, a poet, or a painter, who expressed a fine thought, and gave his genius in aid of virtue (for however much genius, when wandering, was entitled to our sorrow and our excuses, it was only when used in aid of virtue, and guided by right principles, that it should have our respect), was surely entitled to the best consideration of all.

Mr. John Bright, M.P., made a sound practical speech, expressive of regret that advantage was not taken of the means of improvement held out to persons of almost all classes by such institutions, to an extent commensurate with the expenditure of money, labour, and exertions, by which they were maintained. The speaker continued,—I judge, from my own experience, that our small progress arises from our small consciousness of the value of time, and of the value of those advantages which these institutions offer so widely to all the people. We are all infinitely—no, I will not say all, but the major portion of us, are infinitely more delighted with amusement,—many of us even with frivolity,—than we are with that hard study, and that laborious exertion, which is necessary to enable us to partake fully,—to participate fully,—in the advantages which are thus offered to us. We read,—and understand me, I am judging others as I have found myself,—we read often much more for amusement than for thought. I am not disposed in the slightest degree to undervalue that description of reading which is generally known by the name of light literature. Perhaps no man in this room is less disposed to undervalue the reading of our periodical literature, especially of the newspapers. Newspapers give us the history of our own times; and no man can know where he stands in the world unless he occasionally, nay, frequently, looks into the newspapers of the day. I will not undervalue, as I said, this light literature; but I think it is a mistake to consume time to a large extent in such reading, on the part of young men from the age of fifteen to twenty-five. An old proverb,—I think it may be classed among proverbs,—says, "A man is known by the companions he keeps;" and it may be added, that a man may be known also by the books with which he is acquainted. We have had from a preceding speaker a very beautiful description of the value of books, of their being not only a friend in need, but a friend indeed; and a friend under all circumstances, in all times, and in all countries, enhancing our prosperity,—lessening, it may be, our distress at times, and our adversity. We ought then, to apply the same principles and rules in choosing our books that we do, or rather, that we ought to do, in choosing our associates.

Of Mr. Mark Phillips's speech, in moving thanks to the president; the very elegant piece of diction with which Mr. James Crossley seconded it; and the reminder of Mr. Brotherton, M.P., in support of it,* that his lordship's grandfather was the inventor of the Stanhope press, and had introduced many other improvements, we will not speak (any more than of the social and *saltatory* entertainment that succeeded), further than to say, that thus was concluded a very instructive evening, which will, we hope, have the immediate effect of directing public attention to the Manchester Athenæum, and so increasing its prosperity, and the consequent one of stimulating many to the acquirement of knowledge.

* These, and the preceding speeches, are given at length in the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Manchester Examiner* of the 16th instant. More accurate reports than those of this meeting which appear in those papers we have never seen.

DECEIT IN COMPETITIONS.

Sir,—I think you must admit that the architectural profession should stand high in integrity, and that every attempt at imposition on the part of any of its members, either against the public or against their professional brethren, should be exposed and destroyed. It is with this view I call your attention, and, through you, the attention of the Poor-Law Commissioners, to the rumoured statement (which I have every reason to believe), that a certain member of the profession is in the constant habit of submitting plans to the Poor-law Commissioners, purporting, and purporting truly, to contain accommodation for a certain number of lunatics, according to the scale required by them, but afterwards erecting a building to a smaller scale than such plans warrant! in fact, that plans examined, sealed, and approved by the Poor-law Commissioners, as capable of containing a certain number of lunatics, are altered to contain a *smaller number*, in contravention of the plans so sealed.

The object of this fraud (for fraud it really is) appears to be, that the party alluded to may seduce boards of guardians into selecting his plans, and fight off other competitors by the *lowness* of his estimate; and he is stated to retain his position by maintaining his estimate at the expense of the accommodation required. In order to obtain the seal and approval of the Poor-law Commissioners, it is necessary that the plans be figured or drawn to a certain scale of accommodation, which it is impossible to build for the estimate given in. To make all sure, therefore, our architect takes upon himself to reduce the size of his building in the contract drawings: and if the numbers are ever accommodated, they must be squeezed into much less space than the minimum space allowed by the Poor-law Commissioners. The fraud, you will perceive, is difficult of detection, as the Poor-law Commissioners, I believe, keep no copies of the plans they seal and approve, neither do they employ an architect, or other person, to compare the *building erected* with *the plans submitted*. It is, however, to be hoped that, now their attention is directed to the matter, the energetic members of the present Poor-law Board will see the necessity of remedying so flagrant an evil, if proved to exist, or will, at any rate, cease to be satisfied with the slovenly arrangements of their predecessors, which have given facilities for this fraud being perpetrated.

A Sufferer.

Blind Builders.—Tenders for Workhouse at Wokingham, Berks, under Messrs. Billing, of Reading.

Oris	£8,494
Carter	7,842
Glenn	7,788
Lawrence and Co.	7,600
Coberry and Co.	7,532
Wilson	7,394
Trego	7,145
T. Burton	6,986
Clarke, of Sheffield	6,515!!

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